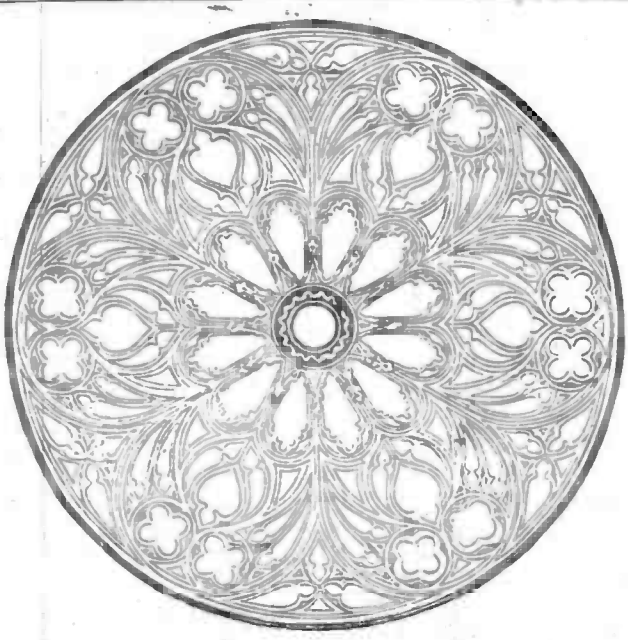


Circular Window, West Front, Church of St. Ouen, Rouen.

Gothic Architecture.

BEFORE we enter upon this subject, we beg to correct an error into which we fell last week in ascribing the introduction of the term "pointed" to Mr. Pugin. It ought to have been in our recollection that, twelve years ago, Mr. Hosking, in the article "Architecture," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, adopted or originated that designation.

We this week present to our readers an outline drawing of a circular window from the Church of St. Ouen, at Rouen, in France. Will it be believed, or rather, would it be believed that if we had cognizance of the fact of its existence, and of similar works of the masons'—we had almost said the magicians'—art—would it be believed, we say, that such things could be?—and we can almost put the question in sober gravity—so long have we been shut out from witnessing the realization and produce of such things.

In the drawing we have given, we have merely included the circle of the window; but the original drawing, in Pugin and Le Keux's *Normandy*, shews the accessories above and below, which are all in full keeping and equally elaborate with this matchless window. The circle is thirty feet in diameter! and may be said to be a huge wall of glass—for the stone has such aerial and almost perplexing lightness, that we may term it a mere filament or threading of fantastic lines—the recreations of the luxuriant fancy of some geometric idler of the monastic cell.

There are other beautiful windows of the same class in this cathedral; and an affecting tale is told concerning their production, which we transcribe from our authority in the following words:—

"In the chapel of St. Agnes" (one of a series of chapels or oratories which enclose and almost surround the choir), "is an inscribed stone, commemorating the melancholy death of Alexander Berneval, the master mason of the building, who, it is traditionallly said, murdered his apprentice from jealousy, he having executed the very splendid circular window in the nothern transept, which is generally allowed to be superior to that on the southern side, which was the workmanship of the envious master."

Pity that jealously had room for entrance in the breasts of men who could do such works as these. One would have thought, that if the mind had not been wholly absorbed and lost in the consideration and contrivance which their construction called for, the passion of the poets—for masons, such as these, must have been poets—would have quelled the suggestions of the darker ones of envy and revenge; but, no! Alas, how true it is, that the highest heights and the lowest depths are invaded by the enemy of the happiness of man!

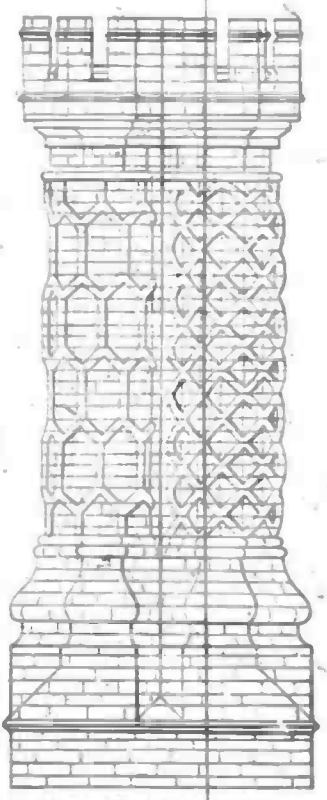
The six main branching ribs of this window carry a section of 10 inches on the face and 1 foot 9 inches deep; the secondary ribs are 5½ inches on the face and 1 foot 2½ inches deep; and the minor or smallest ribs are 3½ inches on the face by 9½ inches—so light and frail in substance is this frame-work of masonry.

The moulding of these ribs, again, is of a character to still further reduce the substance, in fact and in effect; and as if not content with all the evidence of daring which this noble design supplied in these respects, there is a farther effort—one would have thought it an exhaustion of power—to ornament the inner circle. It might be termed the pupil of this wondrous eye, with radiating cusps, floriated and enchased, as is also the case with a facial ring of this inner circle.

This, then, in continuation of our plan, is one of the marvels in masonry which we promised. How many of our brethren of the craft, of the 60,000 working masons of Great Britain and Ireland, will look lightly or disparagingly upon this? Is there one that would not grasp his mallet fiercely, or be tempted to do it, if he could hear the whisper of a shallow brain in contempt of such as this?—but we are forgetting ourselves and poor Alexander Berneval!

We invite the attention of the Bricklayers in particular to the specimen which we have selected from the chimneys of Hampton Court, to shew how their craft in the middle ages exercised their calling. We see chimney-shafts of this class continually re-produced now-a-days in Roman Cement, and we are not about to join in any fierce, unmeasured strictures on the practice, any more than we would question the propriety of the brick fabrications before us; our purpose is to shew what *has* been done in the way of handicraft excellence, and to stimulate, by such means, to equal merit in that respect, and where it is needed to superior, in point of design or appropriation. The bricklayer's art has sadly grown out of late years, so much so as to have reduced the workman in that craft to little better than the character of a mere waller. We could almost invoke the day of tuck-jointed brickwork and rubbed and gauged arches should continue to us, rather than see every vestige of pains-taking disappear, as it is doing under the dominion of stucco and compo. We have some splendid examples of ancient brickwork in our own country, but abroad they abound. One instance we may mention, which we were talking of the other day with a travelled friend, and that is at Pisa, where the whole front of a house is elaborated in cut and moulded bricks, and the bricks themselves of a material and make, equalling in fineness and closeness, a marble texture; but we have modern instances also of very superior efforts in the making, cutting, and laying of bricks. There is a munificent scale of display at Cowy Hall, the seat of the Marquis of Stafford, from the designs of Mr. Buckler. Corbellings, panelling, tracery, shields, and armorial devices, parapets, chimney-shafts, and all done in brickwork: it is an immense building, and you hardly perceive a stone, and certainly not a patch of plastering in the whole exterior.

Our duty is to promote the study of this branch of the building art in common with the rest, to show that brick-making is a much higher branch of the craft than it is usually taken to be, and that the humblest drudge in the brick-yard has something to excite him above his toil. He must be made to understand that he can play a more important part than is at present recognized in the erection of fine structures. It would surprise many to see the hitherto humble and almost despised brick-maker handling between whiles his pencil, and studying the chemistry of earths and their composition, or, which is the same thing, to see the artist and the chemist descend, we were about to say, but ascend to the brick-yard—but this we hope to bring about without any serious delay.



Chimney Shafts, Hampton Court Palace.

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